



Tornadoes

...what you should know and best practices to stay safe!

Tornadoes are one of nature's most violent phenomena. The peak tornado season in the Carolinas occurs in the months of March, April and May. However, tornadoes have touched down across the region in all 12 months.

The greatest danger faced by residents of the Carolinas is nocturnal, or nighttime, tornadoes. A recent survey found that most people acquire weather information by watching local or national television stations or via the internet. These sources generally do not provide a mechanism or assistance to alert users of approaching tornadoes during the overnight period. Conversely, most NOAA Weather radios are programmable and will turn on in the event of a tornado warning any time day or night. This distinguishes NOAA weather radio as one of the few ways to alert people who are sleeping of approaching dangerous weather.

What is the Difference between a 'Watch' and a 'Warning'?

"A Tornado Warning has been issued for your area...". The words WATCH and WARNING have significant meanings when it comes to severe weather, but which is which? It is vital that you know the difference between the two.

WATCH: Conditions are favorable for severe weather development within the watch box over the next several hours.
Stay weather aware!

WARNING: Severe weather is imminent or occurring!
Take action immediately!

What is the Difference between a funnel cloud and a tornado?

A **funnel cloud** is a rotating column of air that extends from the base of a storm cloud that does not make contact with the ground.



A **tornado** is a violently rotating column of air that extends from the base of a storm cloud and makes contact with the ground.

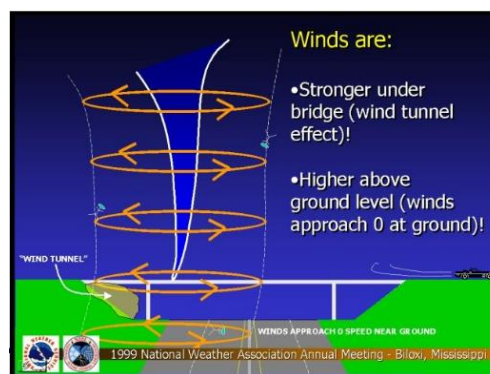
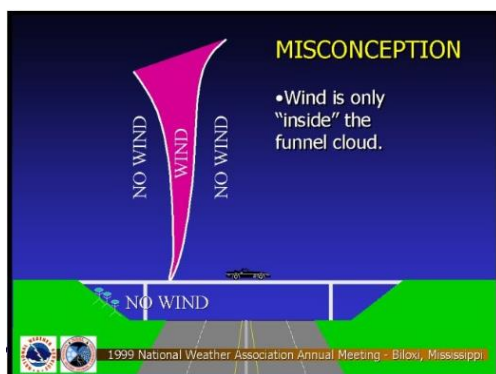


Safety Tips

- Know your sources for up-to-date weather information.
 - NOAA Weather Radio
 - National Weather Service website (www.weather.gov)
 - Local TV broadcast

When a tornado warning is issued for your area or if you spot a tornado, seek shelter immediately!

- If you are caught outdoors:
 - Seek shelter in a low spot like a ditch or culvert. You want to get as low as possible to protect yourself from the flying debris in a tornado. The debris within the tornado is what causes nearly all of the injuries and deaths.
 - Do not get under an overpass or bridge - wind speeds can increase up to 25%.



- If you are in a car:
 - Abandon your vehicle and seek shelter in a substantial structure or in a ditch. Never try to outrun a tornado in a vehicle. Tornadoes do not travel in straight lines and it can be very difficult to determine what direction the tornado is moving.
- If you are in a building (home, school, hospital, nursing home, etc):
 - Go to a safe room, basement, lowest level in the building.
 - If there is not a basement, the safest place is in an interior bathroom or closet. Put as many walls between you and the outside as possible. Stay away from windows as debris picked up by a tornado can easily shatter a window and enter your home.
 - Do not open windows.
- If you are in a mobile home:
 - Mobile homes and trailers are not safe. Evacuate immediately and seek shelter in a sturdy building.

For more safety and preparedness information, as well as what you should do after the storm, follow the following links from Ready.gov - <http://www.ready.gov/>

Tornadoes: <http://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>